

Mentoring Matters

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10 Best Practices for Mentees



We recently talked about [the top ten best practices for mentors](#). But what about the mentees? Don't worry, we have you covered! [Read more.](#)

Here are more results from our annual Mentoring Matters Reader Survey. In this month's issue, our focus is on best mentoring practices and getting started.

Best Practices for Meetings

Making mentoring meetings efficient, engaging and productive can be challenging. Here is what our readers had to say, in their own words, about their best meeting practices:

- Make mentoring meetings a priority; once you give mentoring time away, it is hard to reclaim.
- Be present when you are present. Don't allow distractions and interruptions to take you off course.
- Meet frequently in the beginning and then as needed, so that it does not become a chore to both parties.
- Hold regular monthly meetings. If it's any less than that, the relationship feels forced and disconnected.
- Use your mentoring time well.
- Hold monthly meetings to review your process and engage mentees in the process of thinking about their future.
- Making time, prior to your scheduled meeting, [helps me] clear my mind so I can focus on my mentee and align my thoughts with the plan for the upcoming meeting.
- Take time after meetings to jot down some notes needed for the next time; when I take those prep minutes, I know I will be ready.
- Meeting in a neutral location enables me to give them my undivided attention, and sometimes changing the location of where we meet helps us approach things from a different perspective."
- Consider the timing of the meeting.

I am going to weigh in on the last item: timing of the meeting. I believe you need to think about



*What I need is someone
who will make me do
what I can.
Ralph Waldo Emerson*



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FREE Webinar >>

The First 90 Days of a Mentoring Relationship

Register now and join us on
June 16th, 2015
12:00 PM EDT

*The most powerful and
most difficult part of
mentoring is being
who you are.*
Chip Bell



Dr. Lois Zachary

when and when not to meet.

When to meet? Everyone has time during the day when they are more productive than others. For some folks it is early morning, before the workday begins. Others prefer to meet over a meal or after work hours. Talking about when you prefer to meet rather than where you can fit in meeting time is a sound approach to use for scheduling mentoring meetings.

When not? Build flexibility into your scheduling process. Recognize that there may be times when you are too busy to meet because you can't focus on anything but the project sitting on your desk. Acknowledge that you want to be present for your mentee and reschedule immediately.



Lory Fischler

It is easy to let mentoring time to slip away. Mentors and mentees can get caught in catch-up conversation and discussion about current projects. An hour (the average mentor-mentee meeting time) passes by fairly quickly.

One solution is to use an agenda to carve out space to limit the time you spend on catching up and discussing projects. While mentoring meetings should include a relationship building conversation and catching up on current issues, they should focus on goals.

Is there sufficient time for the mentee to review work on goals and discuss what he or she is learning in the process? If you have given your mentee an assignment or a reflective question to consider, make sure you build in adequate time for a rich discussion. If you take time at the front end for reflection and to plan for your meeting, your mentoring meetings will flow better and be more productive.

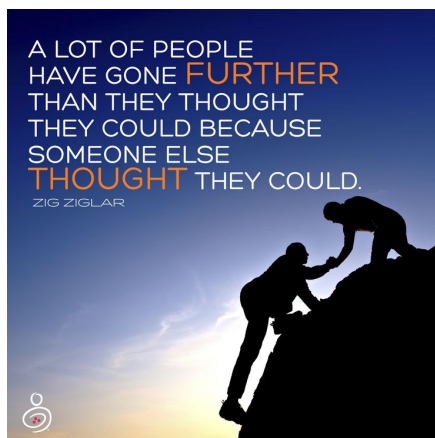
Best Practices for Getting Started

There is an old saying that says, "The best way to get



I thought I was pretty good at strategic vision and planning..... why was I not assigned to the "big" project?

[Click here](#) to hear more of a sound clip from Lois and Lory's book [Starting Strong](#).



A Note to Our Readers:

We believe that leaders cannot be effective without a strong and ongoing commitment to mentoring excellence. This belief, our passion for mentoring excellence, and our extensive experience in the field with organizations led us to create the Center for Mentoring Excellence.

At our virtual center, www.centerformentoringexcellence.com, you will find mentoring tools and resources, expert advice and a forum for sharing best mentoring practices. We hope that you will visit us there and let us know how we can continue to help you raise the bar on mentoring in your organization.

started is to begin." It is a simple saying with a lot of wisdom behind it. So how do you begin? Here are some of strategies that our readers are using:

- Really getting to know my mentee, professionally and personally, before I try to be a helpful resource.
- Establish a trusting relationship FIRST.
- Guide and help my mentee identify what their needs are.
- Be available and allow the mentee to drive the relationship.
- Remembering that it's not about me, but it's about them.
- Tell my own story sparingly, only when it's needed to help show perspective.
- Allow my mentees time and space to think and not jump in to conversation too quickly
- Establish expectations/agreements
- Set the right foundation early in the relationship.



Dr. Lois Zachary

Taking time to get to know one another can mean different things to different people. In our recent book, [Starting Strong](#), we included a list of questions to use to jump start your mentoring relationship. You might want to review these and then add your own to the list. Coming prepared with a list of questions to get to know your mentee will hasten the trust building process and engage you in the process of getting to know your mentoring partner in a deeper way.



Lory Fischler

Many mentors have a prior work relationship with their mentees and make the assumption they know them. They bypass the process of building a fresh mentoring relationship and establishing trust. Even when you work together and feel comfortable with each other, we recommend you take time in your first conversations to learn more about your mentee's career path, personal history, perceptions about strengths and weaknesses, and career goals. Share some of your own personal history, especially as it relates to what you've learned about your mentee. Establish points of commonality and interest. Slowing down and taking time to get to feel comfortable together saves time later. It will be easier

*for your mentees to be open and
real with you, and share their
challenges and struggles; those
are the issues that really matter.*

